The Role of Educator in a Networked World

Stephen Downes, November 8, 2011

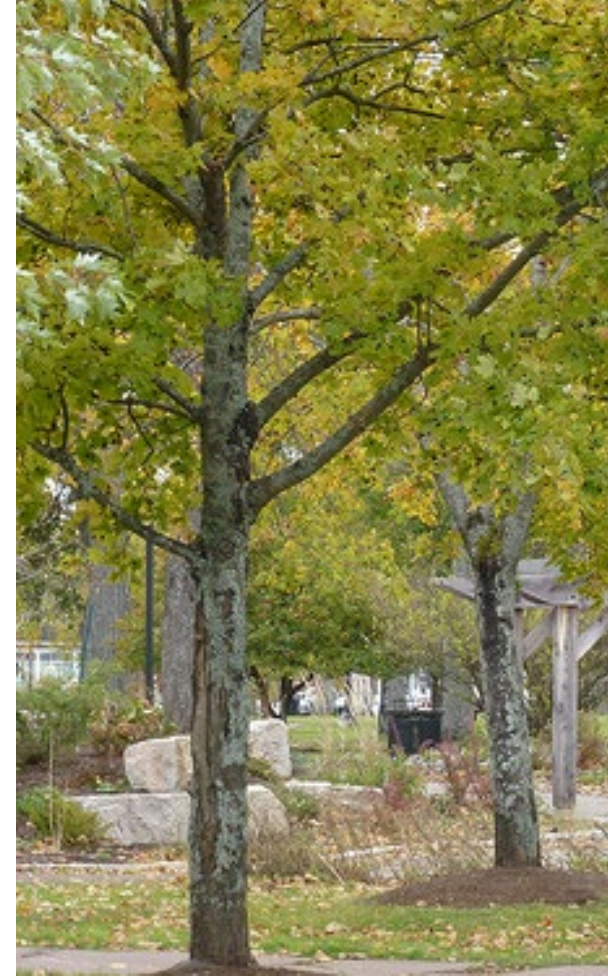for EC&I 831: Social Media & Open Education, Alec Couros

Recent Work

- the development of online learning software, such as gRSShopper, Synergic3, and Plearn

- offering a series of open online courses, such as CCK08 and 09, CritLit, and PLENK, Change11

- theorizing around the idea of connective knowledge and learning communities

- writing OLDaily, giving talks, attending conferences (input input input)

This Approach:

- emphasizes open learning and learner autonomy

- argues that course content is merely a tool employed to support learning, rather than the object of learning

- promotes a pedagogy of learning by engagement and activity within an authentic learning community

- fosters a wider and often undefined set of competencies

- exercises in activities requiring those competencies

- grows knowledge rather than to transfer or construct knowledge through cognitive processes

Major Underlying Theme:

- the role of the educator will change dramatically

- not a 'sage on the stage'

- neither merely that of the 'guide by the side'

- students need to be able to look to prototypes on which to model their own work

- the instructor, therefore, is required to take an active role in the disciplinary or professional community, demonstrating tactics and techniques, and modeling the approach, language and world view of a successful practitioner.

Some Examples

- Free Video Lectures http://freevideolectures.com/

- Roots and Shoots http://www.rootsandshoots.org/campaigns

- Challenge Based Learning http://ali.apple.com/cbl/

- Serialized Courses http://course.downes.ca

- Khan Academy http://www.khanacademy.org/

Something changes…

- It no longer makes sense to talk of 'the instructor'

- Contemporary online learning posits 'course teams', but even this is too narrow

- Dozens of roles need to be filled

The Roles:

The Learner

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Collector

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Curator

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

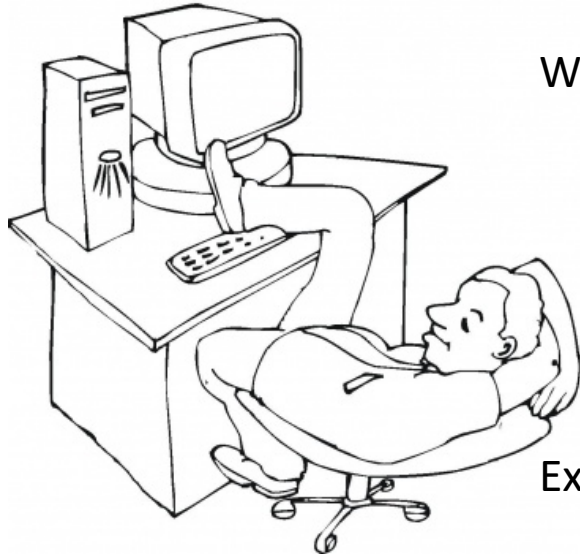# The Alchemist

What is it?
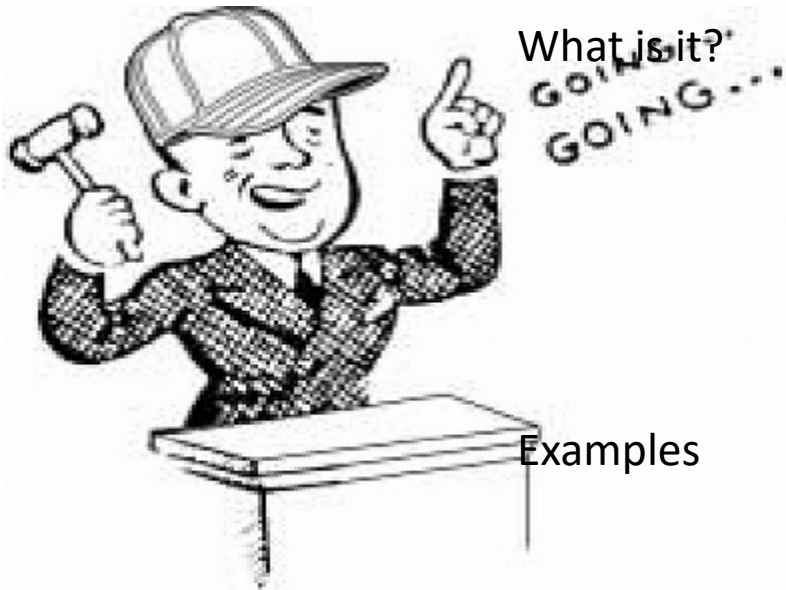
Examples

Who Does It?
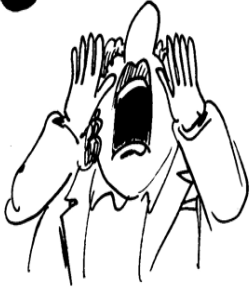
The Programmer

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

Image:

The Salesperson

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Convener

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Coordinator

Marv Newland

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

Image: http://www.primopix.com/biography.shtml

The Designer
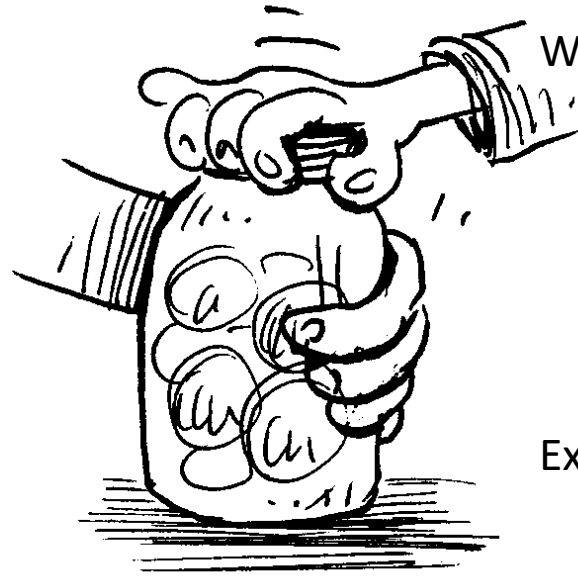

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Coach

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Agitator

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Facilitator

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

Image: http://www.fao.org/docrep/t0807e/t0807e04.htm

Tech Support

What is it?

Examples
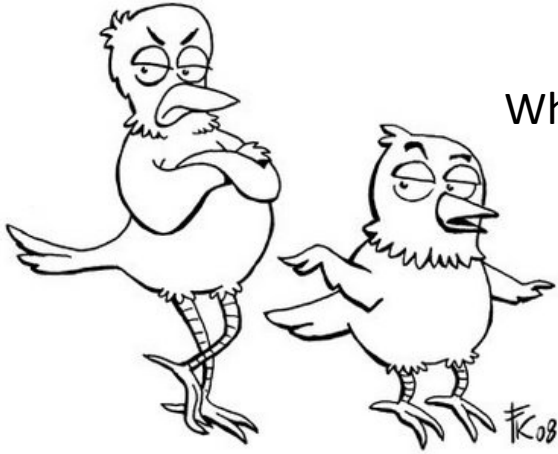
Who Does It?

The Moderator

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Critic

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Lecturer

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Demonstrator

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

Image: http://www.aryadevi.co.cc/2010/10/bagaimana-gaya-guru-idealnya.html

The Mentor

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Connector
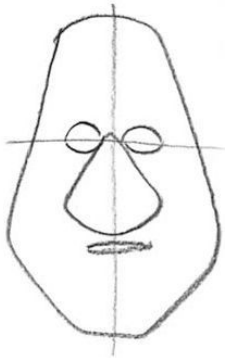
What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Theorizer

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Sharer

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

Image: http://www.kookerkids.com/Coloring/color_3_sharing.htm

The Evaluator

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

The Bureaucrat

What is it?

Examples

Who Does It?

Image: http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/kerry/1955/xx/aflciomerger.htm